1: Leitner 1-3 (1866-93) 18837 AV3 Dard AV3

drunk by the Astóris and Chilasis [the latter are rather stricter Mussulmans than the other Shiná people]. After every strength has been taken out of the corn it is given away as food to sheep, etc., which they find exceedingly nourishing.

WINE.*

The Gilgitis are great wine-drinkers, though not so much as the people of Hunza. In Nagyr little wine is made. The mode of the preparation of the wine is a simple one. The grapes are stamped out by a man who, fortunately before entering into the wine press, washes his feet and hands. The juice flows into another reservoir, which is first well laid round with stones, over which a cement is put of chalk mixed with sheep-fat which is previously heated. The juice is kept in this reservoir; the top is closed, cement being put round the sides and only in the middle an opening is made over which a loose stone is placed. After two or three months the reservoir is opened, and the wine is used at meals and festivals. In Darey[illegible] (and not in Gilgit, as was told to Vigne,) the custom is to sit round the grave of the deceased and eat grapes, nuts and Tahilgutaa (edible pine). In Astor (and in Chilas?) the custom is to put a number of Ghi (clarified butter) cakes before the Molla, [after the earth has been put on the deceased] who, after reading prayers over them, distributes them to the company who are standing round with their caps on. In Gilgit, three days after the burial, bread is generally distributed to the friends and acquaintances of the deceased. To return to the wine presses, it is to be noticed that no one ever interferes with the store of another. I passed several of them on my road from Tahukerbin onward, but they appeared to have been destroyed. This brings me to another custom which all the Dards seem to have of burying provisions of every kind in cellars that are scooped out in the mountains or near

* Wine is called in Gilgit by the same name as in "Inner" by the Astoris, viz. "Mú." The wine press is called "Mú-ri-Khor." The reservoir into which it flows is called "Mú-ri-Sim."

1: Leitner L-3 (1866-93) 1893? AV3 Dard AV3

Gilgitis. When a person is dead, the Mulla, assisted 764
generally by a near friend of the deceased, washes the body which is then placed in a shroud. Women assemble, weep and relate the virtues of the deceased. The body is conveyed to the grave the very day of the decease. In Astor there is something in the shape of a bier for conveying the dead. At Gilgit two poles, across which little bits of wood are placed sideways and then fastened, serve for the same purpose. The persons who carry the body think it a meritorious act. The women accompany the body for some fifty yards and then return to the house to weep. The body is then placed in the earth which has been dug up to admit of its interment. Sometimes the grave is well-cemented and a kind of small vault is made over it with [778]
pieces of wood closely jammed together. A Pir or saint receives a hewn stone standing as a sign-post from the tomb. I have seen no inscriptions anywhere. The tomb of one of their famous saints at Gilgit has none. I have heard people there say that he was killed at that place in order to provide the country with a shrine. My Gilgiti who, like all his countrymen, was very patriotic, denied it, but I heard it at Gilgit from several persons, among whom was one of the descendants of the saint. As the Saint was a Kashmiri, the veracity of his descendant may be doubted. To return to the funeral. The body is conveyed to the cemetery, which is generally at some distance from the village, accompanied by friends. When they reach the spot the Mulla reads the prayers standing as in the "Djenazi"—any genuflexion, "ruku" (q.v.) and prostration are, of course, inadmissible. After the body has been interred the Mulla recites the Fatiha, [opening prayer of the Koran] all people standing up and holding out their hands as if they were reading a book. The Mulla prays that the deceased may be preserved from the fire of hell as he was a good man, etc. Then after a short benediction 765
the people separate. For three days at Gilgit and seven days at Astor the near relatives of the deceased do not eat

1: Leitner L-3 (1866-93) 1893? AV3 Dard AV3

765 meat. After that period the grave is again visited by the deceased's friends, who, on reaching the grave, eat some ghí and bread, offer up prayers, and, on returning, slaughter a sheep, whose kidney is roasted and divided in small bits amongst those present. Bread is distributed amongst those present and a little feast is indulged in, in memory of the 771 deceased. I doubt, however, whether the Gilgitis are [761] very exact in their religious exercises. The mention of death was always received with shouts of laughter by them, and one of them told me that a dead person deserved only to be kicked. He possibly only joked and there can be little doubt that the Gilgit people are not very communicative about their better feelings. It would be ridiculous, however, to dény them the possession of natural feelings, although I certainly believe that they are not over-burdened [177] with sentiment. In Astór the influence of Kashmir has made the people attend a little more to the ceremonies of the Mussulman religion.

In Chilás rigour is observed in the maintenance of religious practices, but elsewhere there exists the greatest 212 laxity. In fact, so rude are the people that they have no written character of their own, and till very recently the art of writing (Persian) was confined to, perhaps, the Rajas of these countries or rather to their Munshis, whenever they had any. Some of them may be able to read the Koran. Even this I doubt, as of hundreds of people I saw only one who could read at Gilgit, and he was a Kashmiri who had travelled far and wide and had at last settled in that country.

F. HOLIDAYS.

796 The great holiday of the Shin people happened in 1867, during the month succeeding the Ramazan, but seems to be generally on the sixth of February. It is called the "Shiné nin," "the new day of the Shin people." The Gilgitis call the day "Shiné banéa," "the spring of the Shin people." [The year, it will be remembered, is divided into banéa = spring; wala = summer; shero = autumn;